

U.S.S. TULARE (LKA-112)

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(c) COMPHIBPACREG 5000.1J

Encl: (1) USS TULARE Command History for 1973

1. In accordance with references (a) through (c) enclosure (1)
is forwarded.


VERNON R. BUSSARD, JR.

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NARRATIVE HISTORY
USS TULARE (LKA-112) 1973

Under the command of Captain Glen R. CHEEK, TULARE welcomed the new year steaming in the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Viet Nam. On 7 January she departed the Tonkin Gulf for Subic Bay.

Upon her arrival in Subic on 9 January, TULARE began an Upkeep period. From 17-20 January, TULARE took part in helicopter carrier qualifications off Subic Bay. Upon completion of the operation, the ship got underway for the Gulf of Tonkin.

After having conducted squadron drills and exercised, TULARE was ordered to proceed to Okinawa at maximum available speed. On 28 January, while enroute to Okinawa, the peace agreement which made an end of Viet Nam hostilities was made official. On 29 January, the ship arrived at Buckner Bay, Okinawa and began the offload of Marine Battalion Landing Team 1/9 (BLT 1/9). Working through the night in very inclement weather, TULARE's crew completed the offload on the following morning. The ship then proceeded to Subic Bay arriving there on the afternoon of 2 February. Immediately, the crew went into action again to onload elements of BLT 3/4. On February 4 TULARE was underway again for the Gulf of Tonkin, as a unit of Amphibious Squadron THREE under the command of Commodore ELLIS, who, with his staff, was embarked on board. The ship, assigned to Amphibious Ready Group ALFA, was to be used in an evacuation capacity should the need arise. On 10 February, TULARE entered Danang Harbor where she anchored for the pickup of mail and repair parts for electronic equipment. The ship continued to steam in the Tonkin Gulf until 15 February when she then proceeded to Subic Bay to affect repairs on one of her boilers. Arriving in Subic on 17 February, TULARE commenced loading stores and provisions. With the boiler repaired, TULARE got underway for Keelung, Taiwan on 19 February and arrived on the 21st. Having stayed in Keelung for five days, the ship then got underway for Subic where she participated in an amphibious landing exercise which began on 28 February and was completed on 1 March. The ship commenced an Upkeep period in Subic which lasted until the 12th. TULARE then got underway for Hong Kong and arrived there on the 15th. On March 18, TULARE hosted fifty school children for a tour of the ship. Ice-creme was served to help restore their energy.

After five days of liberty, the ship got underway for operations in the South China Sea with the other units of Amphibious Ready Group ALFA. From 21-24 March, TULARE took part in various seamanship and shiphandling drills and also took part in an Anti-Aircraft Gunnery Exercise (Z-5-AA). Upon completion of the exercise, the ship proceeded to Tengan Pier, Okinawa where, on 26 March, Battallion Landing Team 3/4

disembarked. On the following day, elements of BLT 2/4 were unloaded. On 31 March, the ship proceeded to Korea. Anchored off the coast of Yang Po Ri, TULARE took part in Operation Golden Dragon in which various units of the Pacific Fleet conducted an amphibious exercise with units of the Army of the Republic of Korea. D-Day took place on 4 April and the exercise continued through the 7th.

Detached from the rest of the formation, TULARE proceeded to Tengan Pier, Okinawa and on 10 April offloaded elements of BLT 2/4. On that same day, the ship got underway for Subic Bay. Arriving in Subic Bay on the 13th, TULARE unloaded opportune lifts to be transported to Guam. The following day, the ship got underway and arrived in Guam on the 18th to offload the cargo. That evening, TULARE got underway for the United States. On 1 May 1973, TULARE arrived at Naval Station, San Diego thus marking the end of her WESTPAC Deployment and the beginning of her stand-down period which lasted through 30 May. During that time, Commander Vernon R. BUSSARD, JR. relieved Captain Glen R. CHEEK as Commanding Officer on 9 May 1973.

With the beginning of the Readiness and Improvement period came frequent inspections both on an administrative and operational level which occupied most of June and July. From 23-27 July, TULARE hosted ninety Second Class ROTC Midshipmen for tours of the ship.

For the first time since her return to the States, TULARE got underway on 30 July for independent ship exercises. For four days, the ship not only held training for boat and hatch personnel, but also engaged in helicopter operations. On 3 August, TULARE moored at Broadway Pier in preparation for Public Visit Ship. Tours were conducted on the 4th and 5th and a total of 3,929 people were hosted.

On 6 August, TULARE got underway for Camp Pendleton to hold amphibious exercises with units of the Army Reserve. The ship returned to San Diego for the weekend. Underway again on the 13th, TULARE took part in unit training off San Diego. On 20 August, TULARE steamed for San Clemente Island where a Shore Bombardment Gunnery Exercise (Z-40-G) was held. Also during this time, the ship conducted additional exercises with the Army and held independent amphibious exercises which included a night landing. Upon its completion, the ship returned to the Naval Station arriving on the 24th. During this sea period, accommodations were provided for two Chicago journalists on board as guests of the Secretary of the Navy.

On the 28th, TULARE held her Dependents' Day Cruise in which wives and families of the officers and crew came aboard for an afternoon voyage that included a lifeboat demonstration.

On 11 September, the ship got underway for Seal Beach to offload all ammunition and pyrotechnics. The ship returned to San Diego on the 13th.

On 17 September, TULARE began a restricted availability period. With assistance from tender and base facilities, various alterations and improvements were affected in all areas. The period from 15 October - 2 November was spent in drydock. The Restricted availability continued until 19 December interrupted only by sea trials on 26 November and independent steaming exercises from 10-13 December. On 22 December TULARE commenced her holiday leave and Upkeep period.

CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS
USS TULARE (LKA-112)

- 1 JAN 1973 - Steaming in Gulf of Tonkin.
- 7 JAN 1973 - Underway for Subic Bay, P.I.
- 9 JAN 1973 - Arrived Subic Bay, P.I.
- 17 JAN 1973 - Underway for operations off Subic Bay. Held carrier qualifications for helicopters.
- 20 JAN 1973 - Underway for Gulf of Tonkin.
- 23 JAN 1973 - Steaming in Gulf of Tonkin.
- 26 JAN 1973 - Underway for Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
- 29 JAN 1973 - Arrived Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
- 30 JAN 1973 - Disembarked elements of Marine Battalion Landing Team 1/9. Underway for Subic Bay.
- 1 FEB 1973 - Arrived Subic Bay, P.I.
- 3 FEB 1973 - Embarked elements of Battalion Landing Team 3/4.
- 4 FEB 1973 - Underway for Gulf of Tonkin. Designated as unit of Amphibious Ready Group ALFA.
- 6 FEB 1973 - Steaming in Gulf of Tonkin.
- 10 FEB 1973 - Anchored in Danang Harbor. Dispatched boats to the landing for the pickup of mail and electronic repair parts.
- 11 FEB 1973 - Steaming in Gulf of Tonkin.
- 15 FEB 1973 - Underway for Subic Bay, P.I.
- 17 FEB 1973 - Arrived Subic Bay, P.I.
- 19 FEB 1973-- Underway for Keelung, Taiwan.
- 21 FEB 1973 - Arrived Keelung, Taiwan.
- 26 FEB 1973 - Underway for Subic Bay, P.I.
- 28 FEB 1973 - Arrived Subic Bay, P.I. Conducted Amphibious Landing Exercise (ZAMEX).
- 13 MAR 1973 - Underway for Hong Kong.

15 MAR 1973 - Arrived Hong Kong.

20 MAR 1973 - Underway for operations in South China Sea.

21 MAR 1973 - Conducted Amphibious Ready Group operations in South China Sea.

23 MAR 1973 - Underway for Tengan Pier, Okinawa.

24 MAR 1973 - Conducted Anti-Aircraft Gunnery Exercise (Z-5-AA).

26 MAR 1973 - Arrived Tengan Pier, Okinawa. Disembarked Elements of Battalion Landing Team 3/4.

27 MAR 1973 - Embarked elements of Battalion Landing Team 2/4.

31 MAR 1973 - Underway for Korea.

3 APR 1973 - Anchored off Yang Po Ri, Korea for briefing on Operation Golden Dragon.

4 APR 1973 - Commenced exercise Golden Dragon.

8 APR 1973 - Underway for Tengan Pier, Okinawa.

10 APR 1973 - Arrived Tengan Pier, Okinawa. Disembarked elements of Battalion Landing Team 2/4. Underway for Subic Bay, P.I.

13 APR 1973 - Arrived Subic Bay, P.I. to onload opportune lifts.

14 APR 1973 - Underway for Guam.

18 APR 1973 - Arrived Guam. Underway for San Diego, Calif.

1 MAY 1973 - Arrived San Diego marking end of WESTPAC Deployment. Commenced stand-down period.

9 MAY 1973 - Commander Vernon R. BUSSARD, Jr. relieved Captain Glen R. CHEEK as Commanding Officer.

30 MAY 1973 - Ended stand-down period. Commenced Readiness and Improvement period

13 JUN 1973 - Safety inspection held by Naval Safety Center, San Diego.

18 JUN 1973 - Underwent INSURV Inspection which lasted four days.

23 JUN 1973 - Continued READIMP period.

23 JUL 1973 - Hosted ninety ROTC Midshipmen for guided tours of the ship held daily through the 27th.

30 JUL 1973 - Underway for independent ship exercises off San Diego.

3 AUG 1973 - Arrived Broadway Pier, San Diego for Public Visit of ship. A two day total of 3,929 people were hosted.

6 AUG 1973 - Underway for operations off Camp Pendleton with Army Reserve units.

10 AUG 1973 - Arrived San Diego, Calif.

13 AUG 1973 - Underway for unit training off San Diego. Accomodated two Chicago journalists as SECNAV Guests.

20 AUG 1973 - Conducted Shore Bombardment Exercise (Z-40-G) at San Clemente Island.

24 AUG 1973 - Arrived San Diego, Calif.

28 AUG 1973 - Held Dependents' Day Cruise.

11 SEP 1973 - Underway for Seal Beach. Arrived Seal Beach for offload of ammunition.

13 SEP 1973 - Arrived San Diego, Calif.

17 SEP 1973 - Began Restricted Availability Period.

15 OCT 1973 - Went into drydock at Naval Station, San Diego.

2 NOV 1973 - Departed drydock. Continued restricted availability.

26 NOV 1973 - Conducted sea trials for one day off San Diego.

27 NOV 1973 - Continued restricted availability.

10 DEC 1973 - Underway for independent steaming exercises off San Diego.

13 DEC 1973 - Arrived San Diego, Calif. Continued restricted availability.

22 DEC 1973 - Commenced holiday Leave and Upkeep Period.

USS TULARE (IKA-112)

The USS TULARE (IKA-112) was originally constructed by the Bethlehem Pacific Construction Steel Corporation at San Francisco, California in 1953 for the United States Maritime Commission. Her keel was laid on 16 February 1953 and was launched and christened EVERGREEN MARINER on 22 December 1953 by Miss Carolyn Knight, daughter of the former California Governor Goodwin J. Knight.

The EVERGREEN MARINER never sailed in her civilian capacity. Just prior to delivery to the Maritime Commission, the United States Navy exercised its option under provision of the Subsidization Program and acquired ownership of the newly constructed ship. The task of converting the vessel into the Navy's largest and fastest Attack Cargo Ship was completed in the same shipyard and by the same company that built her. By 12 January 1956, the conversions were completed and the ship was rechristened USS TULARE (IKA-112) in honor of Tulare County, California, a county in the South Central section of the state. She was the first vessel in Naval History to be named so. The name Tulare is derived from the word "tule", a large species of bullrush found in Tulare County.

Emerging from the shipyards, TULARE boasted several new cargo handling innovations.

As an attack cargo ship, TULARE was the first to be rigged with four large booms on her two quadruped masts capable of lifting loads of as much as sixty tons, which includes some of the heaviest trucks and tanks now in service. These "Jumbo" booms and many smaller booms provide the means for rapid handling of cargo. The concept of amphibious

vertical assault was incorporated on TULARE by the construction of a 4,000 square foot flight deck. From this platform, TULARE is capable of transferring cargo and personnel by helicopter.

Six large cargo holds, each equipped with quick opening roller hatch covers, permit the ship to carry at full capacity 310,000 cubic feet or 7,750 metric tons of cargo.

To augment her capabilities as a part of an amphibious support ship, nine LCM-6 boats are nested aboard her six hatches. Each boat is capable of carrying either a large truck, two jeeps, or 120 combat ready troops. The ship offloads cargo into her landing craft. These boats, having ramps which may be fully lowered, race through the water to the beaches in a continuous cycle of unloading.

TULARE's overall length is 564 feet, while her beam is 76 feet. Her converted Merchant-Class hull has a displacement of 18,000 tons and is one of the fastest single-screw ships in the world, capable of sustaining speeds in excess of twenty knots for a distance of over 10,000 miles and can go around the world at twelve knots without refueling. The engineering plant can provide 22,000 shaft horsepower. Her armament includes twelve rapid fire automatic three-inch guns. Ship's company includes approximately 28 officers and 300 enlisted men.

TULARE is an excellent riding ship at sea. Her roll and pitch under most conditions are at a minimum and very comfortable.

BIOGRAPHY OF COMMANDER VERNON R. BUSSARD, JR., U. S. NAVY

Born in (b) (6) on (b) (6) Commander Bussard is the son of Mr. & Mrs. (b) (6). He attended Jefferson City High School and Jefferson City Junior College prior to enlisting in the U. S. Navy in February 1951 and advanced to Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class before attending OCS.

He was commissioned an Ensign in August 1958. He reported to the USS WASHBURN (AKA-108) for duty as Boat Group Commander followed by subsequent afloat assignments which included Assistant Operations Officer, USS OZBOURN (DD-846). Commander Bussard has also served ashore as Enlisted Distribution Detailer in the Enlisted Personnel Distribution Office, Pacific, and attended Navy Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Commander Bussard has served as a Senior Advisor to the Vietnamese Navy in Binh Thuy and Cam Ranh Bay RVN and as Commanding Officer, USS DENNIS J. BUCKLEY (DD-808). Commander Bussard was promoted to his present rank on 1 November 1971.

Commander Bussard has been awarded the Bronze Star with Combat "V", the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", the Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Vietnamese Honor Medal First Class and Vietnamese Staff Service Medal First Class.

Commander Bussard is married to the former (b) (6) of (b) (6). The Bussards and their three children, (b) (6), reside in San Diego, California.